

Dakota Mission,
Oake, Hughes County, Dakota, February 12, 1883.

Sir: Under authority of an act approved August 7, 1882, making appropriations, &c., "to negotiate with the Sioux Indians for such modification of existing treaties and agreements with said Indians as may be deemed desirable by the Indians and the Secretary of the Interior," there was duly appointed the "Commission to the Sioux of Dakota." "The main purpose is" - I quote from your last annual report - "to ascertain whether the Indians are willing to cede to the United States any portion of their reservation in Dakota; and, if so, what portion and upon what terms." This commission has been faithfully engaged, in spite of many difficulties and hardships, in the execution of the difficult and delicate duty in hand, and will doubtless soon make report of its satisfactory accomplishment.

I would not be understood as desiring to reflect upon the high character and unimpeachable integrity of the members of the commission, but I must respectfully request your attention to the following facts in connection with the result of their conference with the Indians of the Cheyenne River Agency.

1. The demands of the commission were acceded to only after being reiterated and positively rejected, as often as made, for two weeks of persistent council-holding.

2. They were acceded to by but comparatively few of the Indians, thirty or forty at most, and then with great reluctance, at a council extending past midnight.

3. The Indians were assured, again and again, that it could make no difference to them whether they accepted the demands or not - they would not be allowed, in any case, to continue to hold the tract of land in question as a part of their reservation.

4. The Indians were willing to cede the entire Bad River Valley and their interests to the south of the watershed between that stream and the Cheyenne River.